Replacement and cost of per kilometre Rail Track

2231. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total kilometres of rail track that need to be replaced; and

(b) the cost of per kilometre track at current price?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) At the end of VIII Plan *i.e.* on 31.3.97, a total of 6300 kms. rail track need to be renewed.

(b) The cost of renewal of track on broad gauge at current prices is approximately Rs. 55 lakhs per km.

Production of Pulses

2232. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the estimates of production of pulses in the country during the first five years following independence and the five years since 1991-92;

(b) the per capita availability of pulses during the first five years following independence and the most recent quinquennium; and

(c) the reasons for the failure to achieve a major break through in production of pulses in the country?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) The estimates of Production of Pulses in the country during 1950-51 to 1954-55 and 1991-92 to 1995-96 are as follows:—

Year	Production (Million Tonnes)	Year	Production (Million Tonnes)
1950-51	8.41	1991-92	12.02
1951-52	8.42	1992-93	12.82
1952-53	9.19	1993-94	13.30
1953-54	10.62	1994-95	14.12
1954-55	10.95	1995-96	12.97

(b) The per capita availability of Pulses in the country during 1951 to 1955 and 1992-96 are as follows:—

Year	Per Capita availability (Grams per day)	Year	Per Capita availability (Grams per day)
1951	60.7	1992	34.3
1952	59.1	1993	36.2
1953	62.7	1994	37.2
1954	69.7	1995	38.1
1955	71.1	1996	34.0

(c) The reasons for failure to achieve a major breakthrough in production of pulses production in the country are attributed to cultivation of pulses under rainfed conditions and on marginal and sub-marginal lands; lack of application of desired inputs, lack of genetic and technological breakthrough, susceptibility to pests and diseases etc.

Extinction of Siberian Cranes

2233. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the chances of Siberian cranes coming to Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur are receding and have plummeted to such an abysmal low that today there is just one breading pair and several non-breeding cranes of this flock in the basin of the Kunovat river, Siberia;

(b) whether it is also a fact that these cranes are being hunted during their flights;

(c) whether studies have been conducted by Government and International experts in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to save the Siberian Cranes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) Yes, Sir. The Central flock of the Siberian Crane which winters in India at the Keoladeo Ghana National Park, Rajasthan is reported to now consist of only four birds in Kunovat basin of Siberia which include one adult pair, a single adult and a chick. Of these, only the adult pair and single adult bird have come to the Park this winter.

(b) Yes Sir, the Cranes are reportedly being hunted in Afghanistan and Pakistan during their migratory flight.

(c) and (d) Studies reveal that the population of Siberian Cranes migrating to India is endangered on account of hunting and destruction of habitat in the migratory route outside India. Siberian Cranes are included in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act and thus receive highest degree of protection. They winter in the Keoladeo Ghana National Park in which their habitat is free from all disturbances. India is also a party to the M.O.U. for the conservation of Siberian Cranes under the International Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS). Under this M.O.U. cooperative action is being taken to protect the species and its habitat with all the range states and relevant international conservation organisations.

Irregularities in recruitment in ICAR

2234. SHRI ISH DUTT YADAV: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there were some irregularities in the direct recruitment of Section Officers and Assistants in Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Head Quarter, as reported in the "Kuber Times", dated 3rd November, 1996;

(b) if so, whether any inquiry committee has been constituted to investigate the irregularities; and

(c) if so, the findings of the inquiry committee made in this regard and action taken by the Department/Council against the officers/ staff responsible for the lapses?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Some allegations in this regard have been brought to the notice of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

(b) The complaints have been carefully examined by Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board and it has been established that the allegations are not substantiated. However, Director General, I.C.A.R. has been asked to personally examine it.

(c) In the light of (b) above, does not arise.

Performance of public sector fertilizer plants

2235. SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS & FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government attention has been drawn to certain reports which appeared on 13th November, 1996 indicating that Indian public sector fertilizer plants are operating well;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government's move to privatise this sector has been dropped in view of (a); and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is a fact that with the exception of sick units, Central Public/Cooperative Sector Fertilizer Enterprises have been performing well. The overall capacity utilisation of these enterprises in 1995-96 was 101.6% in the case of nitrogen and 95.5% in the case of phosphate.

(c) and (d) There is no specific proposal at present for disinvestment of Government equity in Central Public Sector Undertakings of the Fertilizer Sector. However, three such enterprises, namely. The Fertilisers and Chemicals Travancore Limited, National Fertilizers Limited and Madras Fertilizers Limited have been included in the list referred by the Government to the Disinvestment Commission for consideration under the terms and conditions of the Commission.

Amount spent on modernisation of stations in Gujarat

2236. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the expenditure incurred on the modernisation of various railway stations located in Gujarat during the last three years;